

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session  
(Revised to reflect additions by Councilmember Lee,  
which were approved by Council on 1/22/02)

January 7, 2002  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Temporary Chair Mosher, Councilmembers Davidson, Degginger, Lee, Marshall,  
and Noble

ABSENT: Councilmember Creighton

1. Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Temporary Chair Mosher, who invited nominations for the election of mayor.

Mr. Noble nominated Mrs. Marshall to serve as mayor, which was confirmed by a vote of 6-0.

Mayor Marshall assumed the gavel and presided over the remainder of the meeting. She thanked her friends on the Council and in the community, as well as her family, for their continued support.

Mr. Lee noted the importance of selecting a mayor. He said the Council discussed this carefully and thoughtfully and unanimously supports Mrs. Marshall as Bellevue's next mayor.

Mayor Marshall opened nominations for deputy mayor. Mr. Noble nominated Mr. Degginger to serve as deputy mayor, which carried by a vote of 6-0.

Deputy Mayor Degginger thanked Councilmembers for their support and Mr. Mosher and Mrs. Marshall for their leadership.

2. Executive Session

At 6:08 p.m., Mayor Marshall announced recess to executive session for approximately 15 minutes to discuss one item of labor negotiations. The study session resumed at 6:38 p.m.

3. Study Session

- (a) Eastside Human Services Forum Design and Structure

City Manager Steve Sarkozy said Council will be asked tonight to approve participation in the Eastside Human Services Forum. Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran noted that EHSF will focus on Eastside human services needs and the Executive Board's membership will be more inclusive than the former regional Human Services Roundtable.

Emily Leslie, Human Services Manager, said the Human Services Roundtable began in 1988 and was disbanded in 2000. Ms. Leslie serves on the interim work group that has been designing the Eastside Human Services Forum. EHSF's vision is to assure a stable network of health and human services for the benefit of East King County residents. The primary functions are to: 1) strengthen the funding base, 2) create partnerships and efficiencies, 3) advocate to protect Eastside interests, and 4) provide informed decision making. The Executive Board will be composed as follows:

- 4 local and tribal government seats
- 2 school district seats
- 1 hospital/health care seat
- 2 corporate seats (one business and one foundation)
- 2 multi-service provider seats (one for Eastside Human Services Alliance and one for United Way of King County)
- 2 at-large seats.

A work group will conduct the majority of EHSF's activities and will ideally include some Executive Board members. It is expected that subcommittees will be created to address specific issues and projects as they are identified. Ms. Leslie said there will be two membership categories:

Members – willing to contribute staff time and/or funding; will be eligible to serve on Executive Board.

Friends – want to be kept informed of EHSF's activities.

Ms. Leslie noted that all decisions will be made by the Executive Board. She described the following policy regarding EHSF's position/decision on issues:

First Tier – Unanimous agreement of EHSF membership; all member organizations listed on letterhead.

Second Tier – Agreement by 2/3 membership; only those approving are listed in communication.

Third Tier – One or more member organizations agree; no link to EHSF.

If a member does not agree with a position on an issue, they will not be listed as supporting it. Ms. Leslie said this follows a national model recommended to the work group by a consultant. Financial support in the form of contributions from cities will be based on population, with the option for smaller jurisdictions and organizations to contribute in-kind support.

Ms. Leslie said the founding Executive Board will be selected this month and membership recruitment will begin. A corporate/foundation focus group will be held this week. EHSF anticipates hiring part-time staff in the second quarter of 2002.

Mr. Mosher expressed support for the overall structure and decision-making policy as described. In response to Mr. Mosher, Ms. Leslie said financial contributions will be used to hire part-time staff to coordinate the group's activities.

In response to Mr. Lee, Ms. Leslie said the Executive Board's at-large positions could be filled by religious organizations, local governments (in addition to the four slots designated for local/tribal government), or other interested and relevant parties. For local governments, financial contributions will be based on population. For other organizations, contributions will be based on budget size. Mr. Lee said lobbying was an important function of the Human Services Roundtable. Ms. Leslie responded that lobbying is not expected to occur within the first year but it will be a budget consideration in future years.

Mr. Noble has been involved in discussions to establish the Eastside Human Services Forum. He noted that the need for human services is growing while resources are shrinking. He supports Bellevue's participation in the EHSF. Deputy Mayor Degginger concurred and feels EHSF represents a good model.

Dr. Davidson observed that four government slots on the Executive Board may not be enough, particularly since they will be contributing the major portion of financial support. He noted the Board is heavily weighted to non-government entities. Mr. Foran said the work group felt the Board should represent a wide array of organizations involved in human services. Dr. Davidson said he is not completely comfortable with the proposed Board membership.

- ☉ Mr. Mosher moved to approve the City of Bellevue's participation in the Eastside Human Services Forum as a member organization, and Mr. Lee seconded the motion.

Mr. Lee said he initially had the same thoughts as Dr. Davidson regarding the composition of the Board. However, he understands the importance of including providers in the Forum and concurs with staff's recommendation. Mr. Lee feels it may become necessary to change the Board's membership in the future if the proposed composition does not sufficiently represent all interests.

Mr. Noble said the planning group wanted the Executive Board to represent a range of interests without being too large. The majority of the work will be done by the work group and subcommittees.

Dr. Davidson reiterated that there does not appear to be sufficient local government representation on the Board, particularly since they will be the primary financial contributors.

- ☉ The motion to approve the City of Bellevue's participation in the Eastside Human Services Forum as a member organization carried by a vote of 6-0.

(b) Downtown Transit Circulator

Mr. Sarkozy recalled that Council appointed a Downtown Circulator Citizen Advisory Committee to review the feasibility of a local circulator service. The committee's recommendations are provided in the Council packet beginning on page SS 3-10.

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman said staff concurs with the CAC's recommendation to defer implementation of a downtown circulator system until ridership reaches the point that the cost per trip can be reduced to no more than a range of \$2 to \$3. Downtown circulators were previously operated in Bellevue twice in the past and were considered failures due to the inability to sustain sufficient ridership. Recent growth in downtown residents and employment prompted Council to take a new look at the issue and to include it in the Local Transportation Vision developed approximately two years ago. In February 2001, Council directed staff to create a Citizen Advisory Committee to review technical information and develop a recommendation for Council consideration.

Zee Straight-Weiss said the CAC was asked to determine what a downtown circulator system should look like in terms of routing, costs, and alternatives. Estimates were as high as \$20 per trip for some alternatives studied by the committee.

Project Manager Jonathan Dong explained that the CAC's recommendation, endorsed by the Transportation Commission, is to defer implementation of a circulator system until the cost per trip is approximately \$2 to \$3. As an interim measure, the CAC recommends pursuing the following alternatives in the near future: downtown fare free zone, Van Share, Flex Car, and expanded pass programs.

Mr. Dong provided a brief history of activities leading up to the CAC's recommendation. Staff completed an initial study in 1999 and presented its findings to Council. At Council's direction, staff completed a more thorough technical study in 2000 and the CAC was formed in 2001. Mr. Dong reviewed the findings of the technical study:

- Service should be provided throughout the day.
- There was a need to recognize current gaps in transit service coverage.
- Service should be coordinated with regional services.
- A strong identity should be developed for the circulator service.
- Circulator should be fare free with 10- to 15-minute service intervals.
- Service could help mitigate roadway construction impacts.
- Street improvements would need to be considered.

The technical study proposed a circulator route connecting Old Bellevue, the downtown core, Overlake Hospital, and City Hall.

Mr. Dong said the CAC first identified the needs for a circulator system:

- Downtown residents need to travel from their residences to work, shopping, and entertainment destinations.
- Transit commuters need to travel from the Bellevue Transportation Center to work sites.
- Downtown employees need to travel from their work sites to various locations throughout the day.

The CAC looked at existing circulator systems across the country including Boulder, Colorado; Bethesda, Maryland; and Orlando, Florida. The CAC then developed a list of characteristics for a circulator system in downtown Bellevue:

- Destinations – Old Bellevue, Bellevue Square, Downtown Core, Bellevue Regional Library, Overlake Hospital, and Bellevue Transportation Center.
- Vehicle type – Small passenger van to carry 12 to 15 passengers.
- Span of service – Optimum service hours would be 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- Frequency – The CAC concurred with the technical study regarding the need for 10- to 15-minute service intervals.
- Cost – Fare free.
- Marketing – Distinct marketing theme and service identity.
- Routings – The CAC developed two sample routings for a circulator service.

Based on the elements identified, the CAC analyzed project costs of a circulator system. The total cost is estimated at approximately \$1.5 million per year. With 10 to 20 riders per hour (1,324 riders per day), the cost per trip is projected to be \$4 to \$20. Mr. Dong said the CAC concluded the costs are too high and it would be beneficial to study alternative measures such as enhanced taxi service, expanded Van Share and Flex Car opportunities, a fare-free Metro zone, and special pass and incentive programs to provide free travel within downtown Bellevue. These alternatives were evaluated using the following criteria:

- Does the alternative connect major destinations in downtown Bellevue?
- What are the user projections for the service?
- What is the ease of implementation for the service?
- What is the cost per trip for the service or program?

Mr. Dong summarized the following next steps based on the CAC's recommendations:

1. Begin working with King County on developing a fare free zone proposal.
2. Stimulate demand for transit through special pass programs.
3. Monitor growth of downtown residential and employment populations.
4. Bring a circulator proposal to Council when the cost per trip is approximately \$2 to \$3.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Mr. Dong briefly explained how staff calculated the cost of providing a fare free zone within downtown Bellevue. Dr. Davidson feels the estimate of \$300,000 is high and that it would be more practical to fill up empty seats on buses currently serving the downtown by offering a fare free zone.

Mr. Lee expressed disappointment that a circulator would not be cost effective at this time. He would like staff to continue to explore viable options for moving people around the downtown. Mr. Sparrman said this will remain an important issue and staff looks forward to pursuing the interim steps.

Ms. Straight-Weiss noted a recommendation by Larry Shannon, Transportation Commission member, that the City develop a contingency plan for facilitating mobility during upcoming construction projects such as the Access Downtown project.

Deputy Mayor Degginger expressed appreciation for the CAC's work and noted that he and Councilmember Creighton visited the circulator system in Bethesda earlier this year.

- ➡ Deputy Mayor Degginger moved to: 1) adopt the CAC's recommendation to work with transit providers for the implementation of a circulator system in downtown Bellevue at such time that ridership would result in a cost per trip of \$2 to \$3, and 2) direct staff to work with King County Metro during the interim to implement alternative strategies such as a fare free zone, Flex Car, Van Share, and special pass and incentive programs. Mr. Mosher seconded the motion.

In response to Dr. Davidson, Mr. Dong said the range of \$4 to \$20 for an estimated cost per trip was based on the range of projected ridership. The estimated cost per trip of \$4 was probably overly optimistic in projecting that a large portion of the population would use the service at least once a week.

Mr. Sarkozy noted that the development of a local circulator service will remain a Council and City priority. Upcoming transportation projects such as Access Downtown and transit enhancements will likely trigger implementation in the foreseeable future.

- ➡ The motion to: 1) adopt the CAC's recommendation to work with transit providers for the implementation of a circulator system in downtown Bellevue at such time that ridership would result in a cost per trip of \$2 to \$3, and 2) direct staff to work with King County Metro during the interim to implement alternative strategies such as a fare free zone, Flex Car, Van Share, and special pass and incentive programs carried by a vote of 6-0.

(c) Outstanding Sign Code Amendment Items

Mr. Sarkozy recalled Council's request at the November 26 study session that staff: 1) provide additional information regarding the City's current Sign Code enforcement practice and an option for varying that practice in response to concerns expressed by business owners, and 2) provide information regarding special event signage, particularly in relation to school and day care events.

Planning and Community Development Director Matt Terry introduced the City's new Legal Planner, Kate Berens. Ms. Berens said under the current Code, the PCD Director has the discretion to either issue a warning for Sign Code violations or to issue a violation with a penalty attached. This discretion is rarely exercised, however, due to concerns regarding selective enforcement of the Sign Code. The current fine for a first violation is \$100 and repeat violations generally result in a doubling of the fine, depending on the person's violation history. Pursuant to Council direction, Ms. Berens said staff has developed an alternative enforcement approach utilizing warnings. Violations would still be issued but the business would be given the option of removing the sign prior to a hearing, resulting in the cancellation of the hearing. Staff suggests two exceptions: 1) warnings would not be issued to businesses that have

previously received a Notice of Civil Violation and have been assessed fines prior to the implementation of the warning system, and 2) warnings would not be issued to parties installing a sign in the right-of-way in violation of the Sign Code. In these instances, the signs would be removed by a Code Compliance Officer and a Notice of Civil Violation would be issued.

Moving to the issue of special event signage, Ms. Berens said the Sign code currently allows certain signs erected by nonprofit entities to be displayed up to 14 days in advance of an event. Responding to Mr. Degginger's original question, Ms. Berens said for-profit schools and day care centers are not allowed to display such signs and a code amendment would be required to change this provision.

Responding to Mr. Mosher, Mr. Terry said there are circumstances in which a warning and education opportunity are desired, such as dealing with new business owners who speak English as a second language.

Dr. Davidson prefers a simple and clear approach in which warnings are issued for first-time violations regardless of the circumstances.

- ➡ Dr. Davidson moved to adopt staff's recommendation regarding the issuance of warnings for first-time Sign Code violators with the following two exceptions: 1) warnings would not be issued to businesses that have previously received a Notice of Civil Violation and have been assessed fines prior to the implementation of the warning system, and 2) warnings would not be issued to parties installing a sign in the right-of-way in violation of the Sign Code. Mr. Degginger seconded the motion.

Mr. Lee noted that residents and business owners might not understand what is meant by the right-of-way. Mr. Terry said signs in the right-of-way create distractions for drivers. Staff also felt it was important to make a distinction between signs on private property versus signs in the public right-of-way that are posted without permission.

Responding to Mr. Noble, Ms. Berens said a violation is considered a repeat violation if it occurs within two years of a previous violation.

- ➡ The motion to adopt staff's recommendation regarding the issuance of warnings for first-time Sign Code violators with the following two exceptions: 1) warnings would not be issued to businesses that have previously received a Notice of Civil Violation and have been assessed fines prior to the implementation of the warning system, and 2) warnings would not be issued to parties installing a sign in the right-of-way in violation of the Sign Code, carried by a vote of 6-0.

At 7:56 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared recess to the regular session.

Myrna L. Basich  
City Clerk

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